



The Cleveland Museum of Art

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ANCIENT GREEK STATUETTE AMONG FIRST ACQUISITIONS OF REID'S TENURE AS DIRECTOR

CLEVELAND — A unique bronze *Statuette of an Athlete* from about 510–500 BC Greece fills a crucial gap in all known ancient Greek sculpture between Greece's Archaic period and the naturalism that emerged in its Classical period. The Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA) has just acquired this 8-1/2-inch-tall masterpiece, adding a work of prime importance to the museum's fine Greco-Roman collection, announced director Katharine Lee Reid. A large 6th-century AD Coptic tapestry panel with lively imagery woven in linen and purple-dyed wool, and a pair of 17th-century Japanese screens depicting the beautiful Musashino Plain between modern-day Tokyo and the base of Mt. Fuji, are also among this week's purchases and gifts. Selected works will go on view beginning this weekend in the recent acquisitions gallery.

Reid just began her tenure as CMA's sixth director this week, but she has worked closely with curators regarding their proposed acquisitions since her appointment was announced in January. Commenting on the newly acquired works of art, Reid praised the staff for its research and acumen and expressed her pride in the museum: "The *Statuette* advances the CMA as being among the internationally important collections of Greek art. It represents a revolutionary moment in depicting the human figure that will entice the world's experts in classical art to Cleveland for many years to come. The Coptic tapestry is exceedingly well-preserved and large in scale. It is a perfect secular counterpart to CMA's other great Coptic textile, the unique *Icon of the Virgin*. The Japanese pair of screens, like the textile, constitute an extremely important addition to an area of the collection that is already very strong."

Reid also called attention to an English porcelain stand (platter), made by the Chelsea Porcelain Factor — colorfully glazed with sunflowers and leaves — that has now become the support for the related tureen CMA acquired 16 years ago: "Our life-sized *Hen and Chicks Tureen* is not only a perennial favorite of visitors but is also one of the very best examples of the handful made like it that have survived from the mid-18th century; it's fabulous to be able to enhance it by completing it this way."

The newly acquired ancient bronze is solid cast, in a striding pose, nude, his muscular form turned at the waist. He has the short hairstyle worn by athletes of the time and the physique of a powerfully built individual. His upraised right arm, though damaged, suggests that the artist meant to depict a javelin thrower. Small bronzes like this would have been commissioned by a

victorious athlete, possibly a pentathlete in this case. This sculpture anticipates Polyclitus's famous bronze of a spear carrier from the mid-400s BC, which became the benchmark for ideal proportions of three-dimensional representations of the nude male body. Until now, only painted figures on ceramic vases have adequately illustrated this elusive period of stylistic breakthrough.

Michael Bennett, associate curator of Greek and Roman art, says: "This work represents a fleeting moment in Greek art, away from the surface patterning and stylized facial features of Archaic-period sculptures and toward a new understanding of the way the body moves and reacts under physical stress. No surviving Greek sculpture in the round demonstrates this revolution more clearly than this statuette. It is a unique example of an innovation that was to define the Greek idea of 'classical.' In short, it is the 'missing link.'"

Characters from Greek and Roman mythology dominate the *Scenes of Revelry and Abundance* woven into the newly acquired tapestry from Coptic Egypt (Byzantine period, 6th century AD). This panel would have been one of several adorning a luxurious home, signaling wealth and power with its purple color and sophisticated imagery of centaurs and deities at play. According to Louise Mackie, curator of textiles and Islamic art: "Weekend archaeologists have unearthed enough late-antique Coptic textile fragments that they pop up in every other corner antique shop. This piece's impressive size [nearly five feet high], quality, iconography, and condition rank it among an elite few." It will be an important element of the reinstalled early Christian and Byzantine gallery scheduled to open later this year. The addition of this handsome tapestry is partially funded by the textile department's affiliate group, the Textile Art Alliance, in memory of Robert P. Bergman.

In contrast to these ancient figural works is the pair of six-fold screens portraying a remote, windswept landscape. *Autumn Evening with Full Moon on Musashino Plain* conveys a very important theme in Japanese painting with roots in Japanese literature from the distant past. As Michael R. Cunningham, curator of Japanese and Korean art, explains: "Before the 18th century, this was considered a wild region, lacking in suitable manmade cultural environments, yet a particularly apt visual metaphor for describing the 'landscape' of human sentiments. Matters of the heart, of separation from family or official responsibilities often found descriptive language in poetry containing reference to Musashino as a place of unsettling beauty far from the capital of Kyoto." The artist used ink and color on paper to convey fields of grasses, subtle bunches of white and yellow flowers, and a perfectly round moon of silver. Above the horizon is a "sky" of gold foil.

Acquisitions also include a newly discovered drawing by French artist Charles-Nicolas Cochin the Younger (1715–1790), one of only 15 finished drawings by this prolific artist depicting the festivals and other ceremonies marking important occasions in the lives of the court of Louis XV and his family. *Funeral for Marie-Thérèse of Spain, Dauphine of France, in the Church of Notre Dame, Paris, on November 24, 1746* shows the great cathedral completely transformed — its ceiling the only gothic element recognizable — with temporary 18th-century architectural installations and drapery. Only one other of the 15 festival drawings is in an American collection (the Horvitz collection, on deposit at the Fogg Museum, Cambridge). This sheet is an important French drawing that will be shown in the major traveling exhibition

Master Drawings from the Cleveland Museum of Art (on view in Cleveland Aug. 27–Oct. 15, 2000; traveling to the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa and the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York).

The museum's print collection has been enriched by purchases of two color woodcuts and a set of wood printing blocks from the estate of American artist and teacher Arthur Wesley Dow (1857–1922). Fascinated by the woodcuts of such Japanese artists as Katsushika Hokusai, Dow's own work reflects his ideal of a flat, simplified composition, which he conveyed to students, among them Georgia O'Keeffe. CMA's newly acquired works, *Dragon and Orchard* or *Ipswich Marshes* (about 1908) and *Moonrise* (about 1915), are landscapes exemplifying Dow's goal of a harmonious arrangement of light and dark, form and color.

Among other works acquired this week are the following:

- An early “celebrity” photograph — an image of the great French painter Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres in profile by the little-known Victor Laisne (1807–?) — will be shown in the exhibition **19th-Century French Portrait Photography from the Collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art** (May 27–Aug. 9, 2000), organized to complement **Faces of Impressionism: Portraits from American Collections** (May 28–July 30, 2000).
- Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Buchanan have given a group of prints that includes an etching and roulette image of a dog, *For the Poor* (1863), by Edgar Degas's friend Ludovic Lepic, two Rockwell Kent lithographs (1936 and 1937), and a color lithograph (1966) by Saul Steinberg, who died last year. (CMA owns a pastel by Degas of *Ludovic Lepic Holding His Dog*.)
- The Print Club of Cleveland, a CMA affiliate group, has given two prints in memory of CMA's late fifth director, Robert P. Bergman: Yves Tanguy's etching and aquatint, *The Foreigners* or *Open Sky* (1947); and Robert Ryman's lithograph, *Two Stones* (1971).
- Mike and Annie Belkin have continued their generosity to the museum in the area of contemporary glass works of art, donating nine examples from the 1980s and 1990s.

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The *Statuette* and the textile will go on view this weekend. Several other works will be installed next week: three silver coins from 3rd- to 2nd-century BC Bactria (in present-day Afghanistan) and three gold coins from Kushan-period India (1st–2nd century AD); a sculpture of the *Seated Buddha* from the Lapburi kingdom on the Cambodian/Thai border, dating from about the 14th century, made of a small sheet of 24-karat gold filled with a resin core; a 16th-century Japanese hanging scroll featuring a *Mandala of the Four Deities of Mt. Koya*; a seashell-shaped salt dish and crab spoon by America's Gorham silversmiths; the Dow prints; a Georg Jensen (Danish) silver bowl; and Jay Musler's glass *Ugly Bowl*. The light-sensitive works will be rotated with other recent acquisitions around mid-to-late April.

The porcelain platter will be placed in its permanent home, beneath the *Hen and Chicks Tureen*, in the newly reinstalled gallery of 17th- and 18th-century British art, as soon as possible. The pair will comprise “an outstanding example of the first phase of English porcelain manufacture, an example perhaps without equal in any other collection, English or American,” according to Henry H. Hawley, curator of Renaissance and later decorative arts and sculpture.

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